

FRANCO-GERMAN RELATIONS 1871-1914

45

daughter follows him willingly and his wife unwillingly; but his son, Jean Oberls, the hero of the tale, though he has been educated in Berlin and Munich and has never set foot in France, discovers on reaching manhood that, though he feels no hatred for Germans, his heart is French. He returns home to find the atmosphere poisoned by the feud. His deske to marry into a family of French sympathies is shipwrecked on the refusal of the parents to accept the son of a man who, in their belief, has been disloyal to France. After a few weeks Df torment in his distracted home, where scenes are frequent and conversation impossible, Jean resolves to make his career in the fair country which he has never seen. The story ends with his desertion from Strassburg on the second day of his military service and a bold dash for the frontier, which he crosses with a bullet in his shoulder. His flight breaks off the engagement of his sister to a German officer, who declines to marry into the family of a deserter. Less tragic in character but no less popular were the novels in which Maurice Barr&s, a Lorrainer ^ and an ex-Boulangist, depicts the cruel conflict of hearts and " minds. *Au Service de rAllemagne* describes the experience of Paul Ehrmann, a medical student at Strassburg, who, though French at heart, believes it his duty to remain in Alsace and hopes during his military service to make his comrades fed the moral superiority of France. *Colette Jteudocbe* portrays a girl in Mete who is asked in marriage, and asked in vain, by a German soldier whom she would gladly accept but for the impalpable barrier. The German cause could boast of no champions to counterwork the emotional appeal of Baftin and Barr&s.

In the lost provinces time had wrought certain changes, but none of a fundamental character. The so-called Dictatorship

ckuse giving the Statthalter power to suspend constitutional rights and forbid publications was abolished in 1905. It had been rarely used but its removal encouraged the irreconcilable antagonists of the Reich, and athletic societies enlisted the Francophil enthusiasm of the young. The rapid development of industry increased the ties of material interest with Germany," while the growth of socialism in the towns introduced a new line of cleavage. Moreover the breach between the French Republic and the Vatican diminished the desire of Catholics to escape from the German frying-pan into the anti-clerical fire. The old electoral struggle between the Autonomists and the *frotestataires* was in a large measure replaced by the rivalry